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SUBJECT: MEGAPORTS REGIONAL WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS PORT SECURITY

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11. (SBU) Summary: The first Megaports Initiative Regional Workshop was held in Bangkok, Thailand May 12-15, 2009. The Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Royal Thai Customs, and Port Authority of Thailand co-hosted the event with the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Embassy. The workshop drew 140 participants from seventeen countries, representing various agencies and private enterprises, including customs agencies, foreign ministries, port authorities, and port operators. The purpose of the workshop was to provide a forum for current and future regional Megaports Initiative partners to share experiences, lessons learned, and ways to improve maritime security, as well as to reduce the threat of illicit trafficking in nuclear and other radioactive materials. The workshop included overview presentations by USG and foreign representatives on the Megaports Initiative and presentations by participating countries on their Megaports experience and port security in general. The workshop also included interactive break-out sessions and a tour of the Laem Chabang Port's Megaports radiation detection system. Participants considered the workshop a success and identified common goals for port security. End Summary.

12. (SBU) Background: The Megaports Initiative (Megaports) is a U.S. Department of Energy, National Nuclear Security Agency (DOE/NNSA) nonproliferation capacity building program that installs radiation detection systems at major seaports throughout the world. Megaports systems deter, detect and interdict special nuclear and radioactive material through the global maritime system while allowing the free flow of legitimate commerce. Megaports aims to screen export, import, and transshipped containers regardless of their final destination. Megaports radiation detection systems include radiation portal monitors (RPM), communications systems, training, and technical support. The equipment installed under this program in conjunction with trained customs officials will detect the presence of special nuclear and other radioactive materials in containerized cargo, alerting port and government officials of the need to examine the container and take appropriate action. Megaports employs passive detection equipment that is completely safe for all personnel since the equipment does not emit any radiation. End background.

13. (SBU) The Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Royal Thai Customs, and Port Authority of Thailand co-hosted the Megaports Regional Workshop in Bangkok May 12-15 at the Dusit Thani Hotel with the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok. In addition to U.S. and Thai participants, the workshop included representatives from Bangladesh, Belgium, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Netherlands, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, and Sri Lanka and Vietnam. Participants represented various

agencies and private enterprises, including customs agencies, foreign ministries, port authorities, and port operators. The American Chamber of Commerce in Thailand and U.S. Embassy officers from Hanoi, New Delhi and Bangkok also participated.

¶4. (SBU) U.S. Ambassador to Thailand Eric G. John provided the conference's opening remarks, in which he noted the number of countries participating in the workshop evidenced the interest in the region in maritime security. Key topics raised during the Ambassador's opening speech included the importance of securing maritime trade since 90 percent of global commerce is conducted by sea; Thailand's Laem Chabang port as a premier regional port that has seen an five fold increase in port volume in the last 15 years; and the Megaports Initiative's utility in helping countries meet the U.S. legislative requirement that all U.S.-bound containers be screened by 2012.

¶5. (SBU) Keynote speeches were delivered by Royal Thai Customs Deputy Director General Ms. Chawewan Kongcharoenkitkul and U.S. Department of Energy Director of the Office of the Second Line of Defense, Tracy Mustin. DG Chawewan highlighted the rapid evolution of the global customs environment in the face of advances in technology and increased security concerns. As part of Thailand's efforts to balance security measures and trade facilitation, Royal Thai Customs (RTC) has been working actively with the World Customs Organization. Additionally RTC has partnered with the Megaports Initiative to address security concerns regarding nuclear and radioactive materials passing through the Port of Laem Chabang. Mustin outlined the role of the Megaports Initiative within the larger Department of Energy/National Nuclear Security Administration (DOE/NNSA) nonproliferation mission. She also highlighted the threat posed by

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illicit trafficking of nuclear and radioactive materials to international security and maritime trade. The capabilities provided through the Megaports Initiative are another layer in the multi-layer nonproliferation strategy that is necessary to reduce the likelihood that the threat of nuclear terrorism becomes a reality. Enhancing maritime security through the Megaports Initiative can facilitate international trade, improve host nation security, and enhance the overall security of the international maritime trading system.

¶6. (SBU) Select delegates provided presentations on the implementation of Megaports Initiative at their port(s) while other potential partner country representatives provided a general overview of port security measures. Presentations of note include presentations from the delegation from the Netherlands and the Philippines. The Dutch delegation outlined their experience with Megaports at the Port of Rotterdam, highlighting an initial pilot project with Megaports that demonstrated the value of the program. Since the successful completion of the pilot, the Port of Rotterdam has installed its own systems tailored to meet its needs. Key additions included increased capabilities to handle higher screening speeds as well as automatic identification of naturally occurring radioactive materials that do not pose a security threat. A terminal operator at the Port of Manila in the Philippines highlighted that business has increased with the installation of Megaports Initiative equipment. The increased business resulted from marketing efforts that highlight Megaports Initiative state-of-the art technologies deployed in the Philippine's terminal, which enhance the safety and security of cargo moving through it.

¶7. (SBU) Sessions at the workshop were devoted to the safety of Megaports; the minimal costs associated with running the program; the incorporation of Megaports into broader security initiatives such as the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Container Security Initiative; and the need to balance trade facilitation with security concerns. Participants also heard about construction and installation procedures for placing radiation portal monitors (RPMs) at ports and the sustainability of Megaports, including details on the anticipated lifecycle costs of running and maintaining Megaports.

¶8. (SBU) Common themes emerged from the workshop and break-out sessions. Participants recalled that 90 percent of the world's

commerce travels by sea at some point. They noted that securing maritime commerce while facilitating trade is paramount and that detecting nuclear material at the earliest point not only promotes security, but benefits and facilitates trade by ensuring shipments are safe. They also noted that Megaports participation enhances a port's reputation. Each breakout session was summarized in a chairman's report to the closing plenary. The main themes included the need for communication, the adaptability of the program design, a review of national legislation and regulations regarding port security, the expansion/use of standard operating procedures, the importance of adherence to an active equipment maintenance program, and the need for continuous training for port personnel and management. A key challenge raised was finding revenue streams to fund sustained operations and upkeep of the detection systems, including maintaining technical expertise to use these systems.

¶9. (SBU) Participants took a daytrip to Laem Chabang Port (LCP), about 80 miles east of Bangkok, to view the Megaports systems there. Megaports went operational at LCP in March 2009. Royal Thai Customs (RTC) has been manning the equipment and resolving radiation alarms by cross referencing detection data with manifests or through secondary inspections. Currently, only about 1 percent of containers trigger an alarm and only a fraction of those alarmed containers require secondary inspections. The tour gave participants the opportunity to see a state-of-the-art Megaports facility; they visited the Central Alarm Station, the Secondary Inspection Station, export and import gates, and rail gates. Trucks passed RPMs before stopping to pay tolls and ticket stations at key choke points. The flow of traffic and placement of the detection equipment resulted in little or no delays.

¶10. (SBU) An American Chamber of Commerce (Amcham) representative also delivered a presentation on shipping companies' desire to promote secure trade while minimizing business costs. Amcham Thailand, through its Transportation and Logistics Committee, has been an advocate of safety and security at ports and has hosted numerous sessions on port security initiatives.

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¶11. (SBU) This cable was coordinated with the Department of Energy.

JOHN